

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. With you I look forward to the services in which we shall participate today and tomorrow, praying that the Lord will bless us, each one of us, with the companionship of His Holy Spirit.

I invoke the blessings of the Lord upon all who will speak, upon all who

will sing, upon all who will offer prayers, and in a very particular way, with great love and appreciation in my heart, upon all who will listen by the voice of the Spirit, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Elder M. Russell Ballard will now speak to us.

Elder M. Russell Ballard

My dear brothers and sisters, I am grateful to be able to stand before you today. After undergoing heart-bypass surgery two months ago, I am grateful to be able to stand anywhere. I have felt the powerful faith and prayers of Church members exercised in my behalf these past months, for which I express my sincere appreciation. I have been greatly blessed and publicly express humble gratitude to my Heavenly Father.

Visiting the sites of the Restoration

During the early part of July, Sister Ballard and I had the opportunity to travel to Church historic sites in Palmyra, Kirtland, and Nauvoo with our seven children, their companions, and twenty of our grandchildren. Some people have suggested this may have contributed to my heart problems. I don't know about that, but I do know that our tour of these locations filled our souls with an ever greater love and respect for the Prophet Joseph Smith, for his family, and for the stalwarts who first embraced the restored gospel of Jesus Christ and became members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. What an extraordinary experience it was to teach my family from the Doctrine and Covenants while standing on the very ground where many of those revelations and instructions were received.

Visiting those inspirational sites and immersing ourselves as a family in the

events of the Restoration reminded me again of the marvelous privilege we have to live in a day when we have such clear doctrinal understanding of our Heavenly Father's plan for the salvation and exaltation of His children. The clarity of our relationship to the Lord Jesus Christ and His restored church is precious, empowering knowledge for each one of us. I thank God that in these difficult days of moral decay and departure from sound values, we have no shortage of revealed truth to guide our lives.

Hyrum Smith's legacy of faithfulness

During the past several weeks of physical recovery, I have found myself with more time on my hands than I am accustomed to, with an unscheduled opportunity to think, to ponder, and to pray. I do not recommend the course of action that brought this gift of time to me, but I believe all of us would benefit from time to ponder and meditate. In the quiet moments of personal introspection, the Spirit can teach us much.

The Spirit has confirmed to me the important responsibility we have to see that the legacy of faith of our pioneer forefathers is never lost. We can derive great strength, particularly our youth, from understanding our Church history. As a descendant of Hyrum Smith, I feel a solemn obligation to ensure that the Church never forgets the significant ministry of this great leader. Recogniz-

ing that no one save Jesus only excels the singular accomplishment of the Prophet Joseph, I am stirred within my soul to remember and respect the valiant life and remarkable contributions of his older brother, the patriarch Hyrum.

In September of 1840, Joseph Smith Sr. gathered his family around him. This venerable patriarch was dying and wanted to leave his blessing on his beloved wife and children. Hyrum, the eldest living son, asked his father to intercede with heaven when he arrived there so the enemies of the Church "may not have so much power" over the Latter-day Saints. Father Smith then laid his hands upon Hyrum's head and blessed him to have "peace . . . sufficient . . . to accomplish the work which God has given you to do." Knowing of Hyrum's lifelong faithfulness, he concluded this last blessing with the promise that Hyrum would "be as firm as the pillars of heaven unto the end of [his] days."¹

This blessing identified Hyrum's strongest characteristic. More than anything else, he was "firm as the pillars of heaven." Throughout Hyrum's life, the forces of evil combined against him in an attempt to defeat him or at least to prompt him to stray off course.

Hyrum's relationship with Joseph

After his older brother Alvin's death in 1823, Hyrum bore significant responsibility in the Smith family. At the same time he assisted and served his brother, Joseph the Prophet, throughout the long and arduous process of the Restoration. Ultimately he joined Joseph and other martyrs of past gospel dispensations. His blood was shed as his final testimony to the world.

Through it all Hyrum stood firm. He knew the course his life would take, and he consciously chose to follow it. To Joseph, Hyrum became companion, protector, provider, confidant, and eventually joined him as a martyr. Unjust

persecution engulfed them throughout their lives. Although he was older, Hyrum recognized his brother's divine mantle. While he gave Joseph strong counsel on occasion, Hyrum always deferred to his younger brother.

Speaking to his brother, Joseph once said, "Brother Hyrum, what a faithful heart you have got! Oh may the Eternal Jehovah crown eternal blessings upon your head, as a reward for the care you have had for my soul! O how many are the sorrows we have shared together."²

On another occasion Joseph referred to his brother with these profound and tender words: "I love him with that love that is stronger than death."³

Hyrum's service to the Church

Hyrum gave unflinching service to the Church. In 1829 he was among a handful of individuals who were allowed to view the gold plates from which the Book of Mormon was translated, and for the rest of his life he testified to the divine nature of the Book of Mormon as one of the Eight Witnesses who "had seen the plates with his eyes and handled them with his hands."⁴ He was among the first to be baptized in this gospel dispensation. At age thirty he was the oldest of the six men chosen in 1830 to formally organize The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. In 1831 he stood before the Ohio conference and pledged "that all he had was the Lord's and he was ready to do his will continually."⁵ In 1833, when the Lord chastised the Church for delaying the start of the Kirtland Temple, Hyrum was the first to start digging its foundation. As chairman of the temple committee, Hyrum rallied the Church to perform the seemingly impossible task of building the Kirtland Temple when most Church members literally had nothing to give to the cause. A few years later he repeated this service with the building of the Nauvoo Temple.

Hyrum served in the Ohio bishopric, on the first high council, as patriarch, as a counselor in the First Presidency, and finally as one of only two men ever to hold the office of Assistant President of the Church.

Hyrum served many missions for the Church. During one mission, traveling from Kirtland to Indiana, he endured one of his greatest trials when his first wife, Jerusha, died soon after giving birth to his sixth child. Hyrum's mother, Lucy Mack Smith, wrote that Jerusha's death "wrung our hearts with more than common grief. . . . She was a woman whom everybody loved."⁶

Although Hyrum was grieved, his faith was unshaken; his determination to serve Heavenly Father and his church never faltered. I believe God rewarded his faithfulness by bringing into his life one of the great women of Church history, Mary Fielding, whom he subsequently married. Together they built an extraordinary legacy of love and discipleship.

Clearly Hyrum Smith was one of the firm pillars of the Restoration. But sadly, many Church members know little about him except that he was martyred with his brother in Carthage Jail. That is significant, but he did far more. Indeed, Joseph Smith himself once suggested that his followers would do well to pattern their lives after Hyrum's.⁷ May I suggest a few examples from Hyrum's life that we may wish to follow.

Hyrum's dedicated scripture study

In 1829 when Joseph was finishing the translation of the Book of Mormon, Hyrum was anxious to begin spreading the gospel and building the Church. He asked Joseph to inquire of the Lord what he should do. In section 11 of the Doctrine and Covenants we read the Lord's response: "Seek not to declare my word, but first seek to obtain my word. . . .

Study my word which hath gone forth . . . , and also study my word . . . which is now translating."⁸

Hyrum's life is a witness to his obedience to this instruction. To the very last day of his life, he devoted himself to obtaining the word through study of the scriptures. In Carthage Jail he read and commented on extracts from the Book of Mormon. The scriptures were obviously part of Hyrum's being, and he turned to them during times when he needed comfort and strength the most.

Just think of the spiritual strength we could gain in our lives and how much more effective we would be as teachers, missionaries, and friends if we studied the scriptures regularly. I am sure we, like Hyrum, will be able to endure our greatest trials if we search the word of God as he did.

Hyrum's faithful, believing heart

The second great example from Hyrum's life that we may wish to follow occurred very early in the Restoration. According to Lucy Mack Smith, when young Joseph first told the rest of the family about his experience in the Sacred Grove, Hyrum and all the others received the message "joyfully." The family sat "in a circle, . . . giving the most profound attention to a boy . . . who had never read the Bible through in his life."⁹ In contrast to the reaction of Laman and Lemuel to their younger brother Nephi's divine calling and to the jealousy of the older brothers of Joseph who was sold into Egypt, there was no jealousy or animosity in Hyrum Smith. Instead, real faith was born in him of the simple and joyful response he felt to the spiritual truth of his brother's message. The Lord let him know in his heart what was right, and he followed Joseph—faithfully—for the rest of his life.

"I, the Lord, love [Hyrum]," the Savior revealed in section 124 of the Doctrine

and Covenants, "because of the integrity of his heart, and because he loveth that which is right before me."¹⁰

Faithful Hyrum had a believing heart; he did not have to see everything Joseph saw. For him, hearing the truth from Joseph's lips and feeling the spiritual promptings whispering that it was true were enough. Faith to believe was the source of Hyrum's spiritual strength and is the source of the spiritual strength of faithful members of the Church then and today. We do not need more members who question every detail; we need members who have felt with their hearts, who live close to the Spirit, and who follow its promptings joyfully. We need seeking hearts and minds that welcome gospel truths without argument or complaint and without requiring miraculous manifestation. Oh, how we are blessed when members respond joyfully to counsel from their bishops, stake presidents, quorum or auxiliary leaders, some of whom might be younger than they and less experienced. What great blessings we receive when we follow "that which is right" joyfully and not grudgingly.

Hyrum's service to others

The third example from the life of Hyrum was his selfless service to others. His mother commented on this quality, saying that he was "rather remarkable for his tenderness and sympathy."¹¹ When Joseph was afflicted with severe pain in his leg, Hyrum relieved his mother and sat beside Joseph almost twenty-four hours a day for more than a week.

Hyrum was the first to extend a hand of friendship to a visitor, the first to attempt to moderate a dispute, the first to forgive an enemy. The Prophet Joseph was known to say that "if Hyrum could not make peace between two who had fallen out, the angels themselves might not hope to accomplish the task."¹²

Do similar needs exist in the Church and in our families today? Are we sen-

sitive to the concerns of those who need special attention? Are we aware of families who are struggling spiritually or emotionally and who need our love, encouragement, and support? Hyrum's example of selfless service could be a powerful influence in the world today if enough of us choose to follow it.

Hyrum's response to trials

Another great example comes to us from the dark dungeon of Liberty Jail. Here Hyrum, Joseph, and a few others suffered exposure to cold, hunger, inhumane treatment, and the loneliness of isolation from friends. In this schoolhouse jail, Hyrum learned the lesson of patience in adversity and affliction. In the midst of this most severe trial, his primary concern was not for himself and his companions but for his family. In a letter to his wife, Hyrum wrote that the "greatest part of my trouble" was wondering how she and the family were doing. "When I think of your trouble my heart is weighed down with sorrow. . . . But what can I do? . . . Thy will be done O Lord."¹³

As I travel throughout the Church, I see members being tried in the crucible of affliction. I see members suffering from debilitating health concerns. I see husbands, wives, and parents living in trying circumstances they cannot change regarding their spouses or their children. Every one of us is faced at times with unpleasant situations, adversity, and affliction that we cannot change. Many circumstances can be addressed only with time, tears, prayer, and faith. For us, like Hyrum, peace may come only when we bring ourselves to say, "But what can I do? . . . Thy will be done O Lord."

Surely Joseph was inspired when he wrote of his brother Hyrum, "Thy name shall be written . . . for those who come after thee to look upon, that they may pattern after thy works."¹⁴ May we help keep the promise made to Hyrum in sec-

tion 124 of the Doctrine and Covenants that his "name [shall] be had in honorable remembrance from generation to generation, forever and ever."¹⁵ His name most certainly will be honorably revered as we follow his example and "pattern after [his] works." May the memory of Hyrum Smith and all of our faithful forefathers never fade from our minds, I pray humbly in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

NOTES

1. Lucy Mack Smith, *History of Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1979), p. 309.
2. *History of the Church*, 5:107-8.
3. *History of the Church*, 2:338.
4. Quoted in Richard Lloyd Anderson, *Investigating the Book of Mormon Witnesses* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1981), p. 159.
5. Quoted in Donald Q. Cannon and Lyndon W. Cook, eds., *Far West Record* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1983), p. 21.
6. *History of Joseph Smith*, p. 246.
7. See *History of the Church*, 5:108.
8. Doctrine and Covenants 11:21-22.
9. *History of Joseph Smith*, p. 82.
10. Doctrine and Covenants 124:15.
11. *History of Joseph Smith*, p. 55.
12. Osborne J. P. Widtsoe, "Hyrum Smith, Patriarch," *The Utah Genealogical and Historical Magazine*, Apr. 1911, p. 56.
13. Hyrum Smith letter to Mary Fielding Smith, 16 Mar. 1839, Archives of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.
14. *History of the Church*, 5:108.
15. Doctrine and Covenants 124:96.

The chorus sang "Nearer, My God, to Thee."

President Hinckley

Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve has just spoken to us, followed by the Mormon Youth Chorus singing "Nearer, My God, to Thee."

Elder Jack H Goaslind of the Presidency of the Seventy will now speak to us, and he will be followed by Sister Janette Hales Beckham, general president of the Young Women.

Elder Jack H Goaslind

Spiritual mountaintops

Recently I had the opportunity to attend meetings at Jackson Lake in the majestic Teton Mountains of Wyoming in the western part of the United States. The rugged mountain peaks and the breathtakingly beautiful scenery and the cool, crisp autumn air combined to lift and restore the spirits of almost every visitor. I must admit that the work I'd been sent there to do seemed a lot less like work than what most of us experience every day. The peaceful mountain setting had a restorative effect on me and others in attendance. The world's

problems seemed less insurmountable. The challenges I faced seemed much less threatening. I came away with a heightened outlook and a spirit brightened by new hope and enthusiasm.

Those mountain heights also stirred in me other reflections. I'd like to share some of those with you this morning.

The Lord has often used mountaintops as sanctuaries. In Old Testament times, when temples were not available the Lord used mountaintops as sacred places in which to reveal truths to His prophets. Likewise the New Testament and the Book of Mormon describe sacred mountaintops where God revealed